

Mayor's Column for the December 28, 2011 Evansville Review

Two weeks ago I attended the Woodchuck's holiday potluck dinner at Creekside Place. About 50 people, Woodchuck members and their families, enjoyed tasty food, camaraderie, and good cheer. I was asked to make a few impromptu remarks. As I stood before the group, I was moved by the exceptional power of community in that room.

My comments were brief, six or seven extemporaneous sentences. I thanked the Woodchucks for their service as I spoke about Evansville's wealth because of its committed citizens. From the murmurs and responsive comments, I knew I had touched chords of recognition and awareness.

The Woodchucks are a close-knit group of citizens, part of Creekside Place, who have outfitted and organized a woodworking shop. They work on personal projects. They have established a mentoring program for middle school students, teaching them basic woodworking skills while imparting some life skills and building generational relationships. Their most recent community project was building the garage at Creekside Place.

What I saw as I looked around the room were the many other volunteer hats worn by the Woodchucks and their spouses, in addition to their woodworking activities. Some of the events and projects they are involved with are: meals-on-wheels; Care Closet; Grove Community School Forest; Bird City Wisconsin; Civil War commemoration; 4th of July; Rally in the Alley; election workers; school reading volunteer program; and local church congregation work. Some of the organizations they represent and participate in are: American Legion; VFW; Boy Scouts; Lions Club; Evansville Grove Society; Evansville Community Partnership; Evansville Chamber; Evansville Community Theater; Save Our Lake Environment (SOLE); Evansville Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club; Eager Free Public Library Board of Trustees; Friends of the Eager Free Public Library; and Creekside Place. These 50 citizens are representative of the close-knit dedication that makes up the fabric of our community.

It was not coincidence that the potluck was held at Creekside. Open for eight months, Creekside Place is a busy, vibrant community center that is a symbol of the importance our community places on our connectedness. Our citizens rallied to accomplish Creekside in the midst of challenging economic conditions in our country.

School District Administrator Heidi Carvin called us a Norman Rockwell community in the Evansville episode of Discover Wisconsin. Rockwell's portrayals were about small-town closeness and connectedness. Heidi is right; we are a Rockwell community. We are truly rich because of our citizens' dedication to making Evansville better with strong interrelationships and hard work. I am humbled by our ability to enrich our home-town through purpose, steadiness, patience, and diligence.

It has been a tough, difficult year. The national and state economic and political environments have been frustrating to say the least. We have all been impacted in some way. It is a great comfort to know that our citizens have the capacity to ensure that the quality of life of Evansville will be attended to in differing circumstances. In Evansville, we are a can-do people. I am grateful to serve as mayor of Evansville, a community rich in citizen support.

Community Announcements

Our city government is in need of some of our dedicated residents willing to run for local office. Because of various family, business, and personal reasons, three aldermanic seats will be open in the spring 2012 election. The seats are in Districts 3 and 4 on the east side of the city.

The April election will also include two additional aldermanic seats and the positions of mayor and municipal judge; incumbents have indicated they will stand for re-election.

While the Common Council has been faced with some challenging choices with this current economy, we have successfully addressed issues as they have come before us. I encourage anyone who may be interested in serving for any position in city government to step forward. Local government service can be very fulfilling and quite educational.

In order to be placed on the ballot, nomination papers need to be filed with the City Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2012. The City Clerk will be happy to give you details and can be reached at 882-2266.

Community Thanks

The Evansville community thanks our local Masons, Union Lodge #32, for their donation of an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) to Evansville EMS. This device will enhance the safety of our citizens.

As 2011 draws to a close, I thank the hundreds of community volunteers that make Evansville a truly special home-town. Kudos to all of you. Happy New Year!